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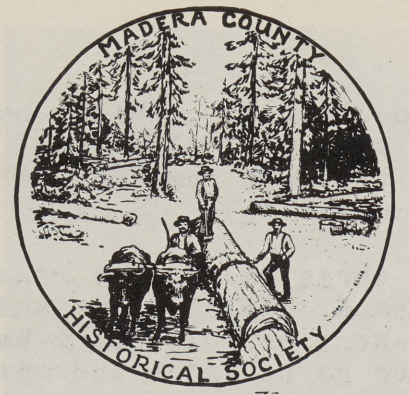

THE MADERA COUNTY HISTORIAN

MADERA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

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FROM AN 1880 DIARY

edited by

Mr. and Mrs. H. Clay Daulton

On June 21, 1880, a group of Madera County friends made a camping trip to Yosemite Valley. They kept a diary of their vacation, taking turns in writing of their impressions and progress.

Dr. C.E. Brown, his wife Matilda Gilmore Brown and Tillie's thirteen year-old, half-brother Willie Mace, started from Madera - the Browns in a colt-drawn buggy and Willie on horseback. Their immediate destination is Fresno Flats (modern Oakhurst) where they are to meet Jack and Jonathon Daulton, their sisters Ida and Agnes and last, but not least, Addie Raynor, the future Mrs. Jack Daulton.

The Browns make a late start as Doc has some prescriptions to fill at his drugstore and hitching the colt proves to be a problem. Shortly after 1:30 p.m., they are off - Willie following on his horse a bit later. Their route is the new stage road which follows the old road, in general, until they get well into the foothills where the new road has an improved grade. This survey was made two years earlier in 1878 and may be found in the Fresno County Archives.

Doc makes the first entry in the

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GUY CROW'S COLUMN

The Madera County Historian is privileged to have as one of its editors, Mr. Guy Crow, founder of the Madera County Historical Society. Mr. Crow's column of historical news will be featured in the "Historian" commencing with this issue.

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Cub Packs in the Madera district have been active in historical projects in their scouting. Their purpose has been to visit historical sites, buildings, etc., and to view items or articles, whether they be in museums or privately owned and displayed.

The boys and their den mothers have visited my home where they generated considerable interest over antiques 100 years old. One of these young men has already started to collect old items.

Walter Williams has also exhibited and lectured to Cub Packs on various items displayed in his shop.

Further evidence that historical interest does exist is evident from numerous requests I have received for information on historical places and old Madera County industries. One person wanted historical data relative to abandoned Madera County towns such as

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diary. He explains that the grub and bedding left the previous day in a wagon drawn by two splendid mules in the charge of "a fine, rosy, fat Chinaman who values his services as cook at $1.50 per day."

Tillie now takes over the diary until they reach the Flats. They stop to breathe the colt at the first stage station and refresh themselves with lemonade. This was the Adobe Ranch about nine miles northeast of Madera. They drive on about nine miles more, northeast by east, to Ward's Place and decide to spend the night.

"Ward's Place is so delightful, the house is covered with vines and and has so many nice, large big trees, a person can scarcely see out for the very thick foliage. We ate our supper under the fig trees and passed the evening very pleasantly for Mrs. Ward is such a dear, kind old lady and made it very agreeable for us."

This was the Mudgett Ranch, Mrs. Ward being a relative, and later became a stage shop when Hutchings described the route in The Heart of the Sierras. In recent years it was called Bates Station and the fig trees can still be seen.

Next morning they were up and away at twenty minutes to six. Their mustang colt was more gentle than usual, but it still took three men to get him hitched to the buggy. Here they came to the new road with a four foot grade and traveled northeast six and one-half miles to George Green's ranch which was a stage station.

This ranch is the Ward Place today and has also been known as Zebra Ranch after the mine by that name. It is about a mile and one-half west of the Black Hawk Motel on Highway 41, but, of course, on the old road. This area was also known as Kelshaw's Corners not too long ago, while the school in the area was called the Green school, the last remnant of the original name.

In another three miles they reach the Peach Orchard. Tillie says this formerly well-kept establishment has been allowed to go to "rack and ruin". In twelve miles they reach the next stage stop which was Coarsegold. She mentions that the hotel was opened in the recent spring. Mr. and Mrs. Foster were managing it and she finds Mrs. Foster a very pleasant lady.

Now let us quote from the diary: "after leaving there we travel along on the old road, with the exception of a mile or two of new grade, all the way to the Flats. We pass several ranches on our way. At the Flats, there is another stage station. The place is not very large. It contains - in the way of public houses - one hotel, two stores, one blacksmith shop, and several dwellings. There is a splendid school house across the Fresno River from this place where they never fail to have a good school."

The Browns found their friends encamped across the river behind Nichols Hotel. Two young men joined the party, Messrs. Stroby and Saxe, friends of the Daulton girls. Doc and Tillie went back to the town to spend the afternoon and visit with Mrs. Phelps and others.

Doc, by this time, had driven his colt forty-five miles, ascending from 325 feet to 600 the first day and on the second, reaching 3000 feet and then dropping down to 2192 feet at the Flats - quite a buggy ride.

On this first night that the party was together, they enjoyed a campfire. Two Flats' residents, Miss Nichols and Mr. Drew, were visitors

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until 10 o'clock when "we spread our beds under the canopy of heaven."

Breakfast was at 6 o'clock next morning for an early start. Addie, Willie and Jonathon riding horseback; the rest in buggies. In order not to meet the stage coach on a narrow grade, the party stopped after eight miles and waited for it to pass. Aggie Daulton describes this part of the trip and mentions wild flowers, beautiful scenery, and the easy grade of the road.

This section of road between the Flats and Big Creek was surveyed in 1879 and is Map 198 in the Fresno County Archives. The map was located for this occasion with the help of Mr. William R. Pearce of the Fresno County Public Works Department. According to the map the road was planned by the Yosemite Stage and Turnpike Co., E.C. Fellows, President, and J. Knowlton, Secretary.

The direction traveled was almost exactly north. Eleven miles from the Flats they reached a stage station which Hutchings called Board Ranch. Three and one-half miles farther, they reach Deep Creek, so-called by Tillie, but really Big Creek at modern Fish Camp. Here they meet Dr. Rowell of Fresno and his friends on their way home; they had stopped for lunch.

It was necessary to make camp here to allow the camp wagon and cook to catch up, so they all fished in Big Creek until evening with no success. Doc solved the dinner requirements by hiking up stream to an Indian camp and buying some fish. Another campfire in the evening with card playing and to bed at 10 o'clock.

Away at seven in the morning leaving the Chinaman to wait for the stage to pass before he starts. They met the stage before long and struggled to get the buggies off the road in time. It kept the ladies in a dither until the big six horse stage passed.

Two miles from their last camp, they turned to go up to the Mariposa Grove of Sequoias, just as we do today, and there they admired the grand old trees: Grizzly Giant, Faithful Couple, Wawona Tree, Telescope Tree and Fallen Monarch. Many have kept their original names these eighty years.

At last they turned back to make Big Tree Station (modern Wawona) for their midday meal. There they found a hotel, stable, store and blacksmith shop. After eating, they decided to go on and made Eleven Mile Station at sunset. Today, this spot is off the road, although the general area is still called Eleven Mile.

They arrive on the floor of Yosemite Valley next day and stretch their tent under oak trees directly in front of beautiful Yosemite Falls. From their camp they could hear the roar of the falls, for 1880 was a wet year.

Following day they fished, went to the foot of Yosemite Falls, cleaned up at the village and shopped at the store. From camp to village, they took the plank walk over the marshy meadow. That night the Chinaman took a night off and they all pitched in to get supper.

* *

Pictured together on Page 3 are the members of an 1880 camping trip to Yosemite Valley. Left to right standing: Jonathon Daulton, Willie Mace, Jack Daulton, Dr. C.E. Brown. Left to right seated: Agnes Daulton, Adelaide Raynor, Ina Mace, Mrs. Mace, Mrs. Tillie Brown and Ida Daulton.

Their second day in the valley, they saddled up and rode the trail to the top of Yosemite Falls. At Columbia Rock they stopped and looked down into the valley. They reach the top, admire the view of the rushing water, a rainbow, and then start down. A few accompany the guide on a detour behind the falls. Wind and spray were so strong, they almost knocked Tillie Brown down. After returning to the trail, they rested and dried off a bit. The guide told them the trail was completed to Columbia Rock, June 7, 1873, and to Eagle Point on September 15, 1877. They reached camp at 2:00 p.m. for dinner.

After dinner, a buggy ride to Mirror Lake occupied the afternoon, the girls putting on their hats and dusters. Expecting to find a house and boats at the lake, they found the house burned down and a boat full of cracks. The house was Mirror Lake House built in 1874 by W.J. Howard, deputy sheriff of Mariposa County. (The Last of the California Rangers, Crossley-Batt, 1928)

Returning to the village, they stopped at Johnie Smith's saloon, The Cosmopolitan, for a lemonade and then on to Leidig's Hotel where they found Mrs. Mace and her small daughter Ina who had arrived on the stage. Mrs. Mace decided to spend the night at the hotel.

Next day was June 27th, and all got up early to say goodby to Mr. Stroby and Mr. Saxe who were sheepmen and must return to their duties. "We all regreted so much to have them go - they were such good company."

Afterwards, the party decided to go up to Vernal and Nevada Falls. It was quite a distance before the trail began to climb, but they soon arrived at the toll house. A guide took them to Vernal Falls for the view. The girls went on by the horse trail to the top of the falls, tied their horses, then climbed down on two flights of stairs close to the falls. The rest came up the other trail and met them and here all enjoyed a picnic lunch. Mrs. Mace was one of the party.

Doc and Jack go behind the falls and have a thrilling experience while the others wait and rest. Then all climb up the stairs together to Snow's for liquid refreshments. Snow built his "La Casa Nevada" and the trail to it in 1869-70, according to C.P. Russell in One Hundred Years in Yosemite. Building, stairs and toll house are since gone; the building burned in the nineties.

On the 28th, the morning was given over to rest and the afternoon to a buggy trip to Bridalveil Falls. All were impressed by its beauty and managed to get close enough to be drenched by the spray.

Next day, Glacier Point trip was undertaken. Ida decided to stay in camp, so Mrs. Mace left little Ina with her. The trail starts behind Leidig's Hotel; they stop at the toll house, as each trail had one, and are given trail description booklets. They find the trail good, but steep. At the top is an iron railing around the edge of the cliff, and a bulletin board upon which to inscribe their names. After all had absorbed the view of the valley from the iron railing, they went down to the Mountain House. They discovered it was of rustic construction, hand split and hand sawed on the mountain with many names on the walls, inside and out. On their way down, they stopped at a brook for lunch, and then back to camp - a very tired bunch of campers.

Wednesday, June 30th, was clean-up and picture-taking day - the professional photographer having a date with them. This was followed with souvenir hunting in a village shop.

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GUY CROW'S COLUMN (Continued)

Buchanan, Grub Gulch, Minarets and Daulton. Another person was interested in early history of the old Italian Swiss Colony Winery west of Madera.

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Recent readings have included a book published in 1905 - San Joaquin Valley. It includes information of William H. Thurman, founder of the city of Madera.

Born in 1831 in Winchester, Tenn., he left home at 16 to enlist in the Mexican War serving under Gen. Winfield Scott. He crossed the plains to California in 1849, trying his luck in mining, teaming and freighting, and lumber in Coulterville.

Thurman then moved to what is now Madera County, organizing the old California Lumber Co. and built a 60 mile flume from the mills to the new main town. He gave this new town the Spanish name of Madera - lumber.

A man of inventive nature, he devised a number of articles to aid in his work. Among these was a clamp (patented) which holds lumber together in bundles for transportation through the flume.

He continued in the lumber business as logging contractor for the Madera Flume and Trading Co. and building a mill in Mariposa County.

May 16, 1893, he was elected Madera County Sheriff until January, 1895. Ill health led him to move to San Diego where he died December, 1895, 64 years of age.

His wife was Emma Bludworth Thurman and they had four sons. In 1905 when this history was written, W.B. was a resident of Madera; George S., manager of a San Francisco commission house; Arthur L., conductor on Southern Pacific Railroad; and James D., attorney in San Francisco.

FROM AN 1880 DIARY (Continued)

Another day of rest, then on July 2nd they break up camp and start for home, Mrs. Mace and Ina going by stage as they came. They made it out to Eleven Mile Station for their first night. On the way, they passed Capt. Conway, owner and builder of Yosemite Falls trail and builder of most of the other trails, striding along on foot and Agnes remarked how fast those old mountaineers could get over the roads.

Following day brought them back to their campground at Big Creek. The buggy riders arrived first, but soon the cook with his team, Ida and the boys on horseback, rode in. Before they left next morning, the stage with Mrs. Mace and Ina on board went by; a very merry crowd, all singing and laughing.

The trip to the Flats required most of the day after an early start. They camp again near the Nichols Hotel, and give the Nichols' girls a glowing description of Yosemite Valley. A dance in their honor was given that night by their local friends in the dining room of the Gash Hotel - a fitting finale for a wonderful trip.

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MADERA COUNTY HISTORIAN

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